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**Experience of the Undocumented Worker in the Berkshires: An
Exploratory Study**

**A project based upon an independent investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.**

Tristan Muriel

**Smith College School for Social Work
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063**

2016

Tristan Muriel
Experience of the
Undocumented Worker in
the Berkshires: An
Exploratory Study

ABSTRACT

This qualitative exploratory study attempts to understand how undocumented workers navigate living in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Berkshire County is known as a fairly liberal area of the state of Massachusetts. This can be observed through the most recent election turn out which was taking place during this study, where 84% of the total Berkshire active voting population voted for democratic primary candidates while 10% supported Donald Trump and his anti-immigrant sentiment. Observing this, more respectful treatment towards undocumented workers can be expected in this area. This study recruited 12 undocumented workers through a snowball non-probability approach. Each participant was interviewed in person about how they obtained and maintained work, found housing, and accessed medical care in Berkshire County. This study used critical race theory as a framework to understand the information gathered about the participant's experience, such as perceived less pay, differential treatment compared to their American coworkers, and fear of taking sick time because of threats of losing their jobs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge John Erlich for his kind support, encouragement, and his consistent guidance as my thesis advisor. I further wish to acknowledge the participants of this study who allowed me the opportunity to gain insight into their experiences living in the Berkshires. Finally, I acknowledge the strong women in my life, my mother Susan for her endless support, patience, and motivation, my grandmother Laura for wanting more for me, and my two daughters Mia and Ava for loving me through it all.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

During the primary season of 2016 there is a lot of anger and disgust among Donald Trump supporters. Donald Trump, an American businessman currently running for the Republican nomination for President of the United States, has gained a huge support base from Americans across the U.S. who agree with his immigration policy. Trump has made it clear that if he is elected he would demand a wall between the United States and Mexico and would have Mexico pay for this construction (Santos, 2016).

When Donald Trump discusses this plan during his campaign speeches, it seems to receive much enthusiasm and applause from his crowd (Santos, 2016). It appears that Trump is utilizing economic anxiety to gain supporters and fuel his campaign. Trump followers represent a population in the United States that is concerned about the loss of jobs and have associated this problem with the population of undocumented workers living in the country.

Economic issues in the United States are a huge contributor to how immigrants and immigration will be perceived. During hard economic times in the U.S., historically, undocumented workers are blamed for taking jobs away from individuals who feel that being born in this country makes those jobs rightfully theirs. In the article, “Economic Costs, Economic Benefits, and Attitudes Toward

Immigrants and Immigration”, the authors explain that there is correlational and experimental research that the authors have collected in the span of 10 years that show the relation between economic hardship and negative attitudes towards undocumented workers and immigration (Esses, Brochu, & Dickson, 2012). An example used in the article describes how unemployment and gross domestic product real growth rate decreased in Arizona between 2006-2009 while negative attitudes towards undocumented Mexican individuals increased (Esses, Brochu, & Dickson, 2012).

In difficult economic times individuals become concerned about how they can provide for themselves and their families. It is during this time that it is easier for people to find support in groups who share similar characteristics (Chavez-Duenas, Adames, & Organista, 2014). Because of the perceived importance of needing to survive, it is now easier to separate into “we” and “others”. In the case of hard economic times it is easier to view “others” as attempting to threaten their livelihood and race is the first observable way to begin separating from individuals who do not “look” like the dominant group (Lee, Ottati, & Hussain, 2001). Racism is an important factor to consider when understanding the consistent negative attitude towards undocumented individuals in the U.S. during economic hardship.

It is difficult to comprehend that at one time during American history immigration was encouraged in the United States and that the ancestry of the dominant group populating it now is not native to this country. The largest increase in illegal immigrants entering the United States occurred between the years of 1995-2000 (Chavez, 2015). During this time as many as 1.6 million undocumented

individuals entered the country per year (Chavez, 2015). This influx decreased severely after the beginning of the 2008 recession when jobs usually occupied by this population decreased and border enforcement spending increased (Chavez, 2015).

Americans have conflicting views on whether they welcome or resent individuals entering the country to work without legal recognition from the government (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2011). There is significant research suggesting that because of sub-standard conditions of employment and pay for these individuals, there is often a large financial return for the businesses or company that employs them (Jayaraman, 2014). This is due to the fact that these individuals often have no option other than to agree to work for an uncertain amount of pay, and employers are not expected to provide health insurance and other benefits to individuals who, under the U.S. law, do not exist.

This type of exploitation can be viewed as “acceptable” modern day slavery, where individuals who are not protected under the laws of the country they reside in are exploited for their services. These undocumented workers are easily disposed of if they advocate for better working conditions, and replaced with more willing and desperate workers with the same illegal status. The unspoken understanding between the employer and the worker is that the worker is seeking better life opportunities and this places them in a vulnerable position if they are not protected under the country’s labor laws.

Do all people deserve an environment in which they can at least meet their basic needs? Do people have the right to obtain employment, to care for themselves and their families, without exploitation by the employer? Also should the right to

care for one's health be viewed as a privilege or a right, which is accessible to all regardless of their immigration status? Is the right to shelter another right that should be recognized as important not only to the resident but to the community as a whole?

A goal of this study is to investigate the working conditions experienced by undocumented individuals in the Berkshire region of Massachusetts. It is also important to inquire about their experience in accessing health care and what their options for housing are in Berkshire County. For the purpose of this proposal the researcher will use the Merriam-Webster Dictionary to define an undocumented individual: a person who was not born in the United States or its territories. This individual does not possess the required documentation to enter, reside, or work in the United States legally (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015). A purpose of this study is to explore and better understand the experiences of undocumented individuals in a work force in which they are not legally allowed to work.

Berkshire County covers the western side of Massachusetts and borders Vermont, New York, and Connecticut. The Berkshires was home to the Mohican tribe until the 17th century when Dutch settlers began to move into the area from New York (McLaughlin, 2007). Eventually it was settled mostly by the English, which can be observed by the names of the towns in the county such as Richmond, Sheffield, etc. Today Berkshire county prides itself on being a tourist destination, promoting its natural and cultural resources and historical importance such as the birthplace for the book "Moby Dick" (McLaughlin, 2007) . Currently there is a

growing immigrant population working illegally while occupying positions mostly in the hospitality field (Berkshire Eagle, 2014).

An important reason to explore the working conditions of undocumented folk is to provide awareness as to how these individuals are treated when they are not protected under the law. Because of the lack of consequences for employers who might exploit these undocumented employees, it is important to investigate the possibility of inhumane conditions in which these workers are expected to perform. Should all workers, regardless of where they were born, be able to work and provide for their families without the fear of being placed in dangerous and unhygienic environments? Should they also be able to feel safe while working, without fear of being reported to authorities and possibly deported if they make efforts to stand up for themselves and demand better working conditions?

Individuals move to seek lives in the United States because there is the promise of a better “quality of life”, a safer place to raise a family, and economic opportunities (Sanchez-R, Alysia-Lastra, 2013). These individuals are willing to take the dangerous journey to enter this country because of strife and lack of safety and job opportunities in their country of origin. Another important factor for moving to United States is educational opportunity for their children. Many of these individuals are willing to compromise their own working backgrounds, which might have been less rigorous or more “professional” in their own country, to engage in manual labor so that their children can have access to education opportunities unavailable in their own countries.

Is the struggle for survival, personal development and empowerment a human right, including moving to an area that could possibly support that? As long as there is a promise of a better life somewhere else, choosing to move on because of the need to seek refuge from torture, political conflict, war, lack of food and poverty is to be expected (Inghammar, 2010). The question is, how can we support undocumented individuals and how can we avoid impeding them from reaching their goal of a better life for themselves and their families? It can be assumed that if they are entering the country through illegal means it is because all legal pathways are closed and unattainable for them. As long as there is significant inequality of wealth distribution among countries, migration should not be unexpected (Inghammar, 2010).

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 explains that all humans have the right to work, work in favorable conditions and receive fair compensation for their work (Inghammar, 2010). The United States is a nation where the majority population is made up of individuals whose family had immigrated to find a better life. Part of this journey to begin a wholesome life in a new country was to have the opportunity to work and provide for their families while living free of persecution. The current anti-immigration sentiment in the U.S. has been a heated topic in the 2016 primary, questioning the motivation of immigrants entering the country and blaming this population for the shortage of jobs available for native-born Americans. The following literature review will attempt to explore how this anti-immigrant sentiment began in the United States and how it is currently maintained.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Using Immigration as a Trump Card

Economic insecurity and the “intensity of their economic nationalism” (Beutler, 2016) has been the angle that Donald Trump has used to gain supporters during his presidential primary run in 2016. Not only has Donald Trump blasted this as a way to appear sympathetic towards what the American people are struggling with, he has also found a population to blame this on: illegal immigrants. Trump supporters seem to find comfort in his claims to understand their economic struggles, and they trust that he will look out for them if he becomes president by

deporting undocumented workers, who are perceived to be taking away their jobs. This camaraderie among Trump and his supporters seems to indicate that they agree with his plan to deport 11 million individuals (Chavez, 2015).

About two-thirds of the people that Trump and his supporters want deport have lived in the United States for more than 10 years and have families and children who are born here (Chavez, 2015). But how could Donald Trump, an American businessman with a net worth of 4.5 billion dollars (Santos, 2016), truly understand the struggle of the average American? Using anti-immigration speeches to play on economic anxieties does not seem authentic coming from someone who is wealthy. Donald Trump is wealthy therefore not threatened financially by undocumented workers. Why then does he use deportation to bring together Americans who are frustrated enough to agree with what seems to be a racially charged approach to running a presidential 2016 primary? During election years anti-immigration sentiment and immigration policy is used as an “effective tool to mobilize the right” (Santos, 2016). It is clear that Trump is not exactly original in exploiting anxieties based on racism to persuade the American people to pledge their loyalty to him.

History of Attitudes towards Immigrants In The United States

Racial conflict in the United States has paralleled its development as a nation since the beginning of its history and continues today. Despite the progress made in the United States through such monumental conflicts as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, racism and inequality still plague the country. A prime example

of obvious racial division in modern day America is its immigration policy. Some examples of racial profiling are Proposition 187 in California and Arizona's Bill 1070. California Proposition 187 was designed to limit the number of Latino immigrants crossing the Mexican border into California. This proposition deprives individuals who have entered the country illegally from receiving welfare benefits, education and medical care unless it is an emergency. It also requires state workers such as teachers, police officers, and welfare workers to report any knowledge of illegal immigrants (Lee, Ottati, & Hussain, 2001).

Similarly Arizona's Bill 1070 also requires state workers to report any information on illegal immigrants and also allows police officers to check an individual's immigration status during an arrest or a detention for a suspected crime (Esses, Brochu, & Dickson, 2012). Enforcing this provision of this particular bill requires racial profiling; how would the police officer determine who among the people they have detained should be asked for immigration status papers? Racism appears to be the driving force behind these bills but the advocates of the bills justify them by stressing the need to conserve economic resources for American citizens, which is why they are supported.

As asked by John Tanton, "Can homo contraceptivus compete with homo progenerativa if borders aren't controlled?" (Elford, 2010). How Modern U.S. Anti-Immigration Sentiment Began

In the article "Donald Trump's America: His notions about the evils of immigration are based on untruths that promote ideas noxious to conservatives and

imperil the legacy of the Republican Party”, the author provides some background as to how a man named John Tanton contributed in influencing a nation in viewing the immigrant population of color as a menace to the white hardworking American (Chavez, 2015). John Tanton, an ophthalmologist, became interested in immigration after being involved as an environmentalist and population control advocate. Dr. Tanton was concerned with the U.S. becoming over populated and decided that the only practical way to control the population was to restrict immigrants from entering the country. According to Tanton this is not the only factor affecting the population growth in the U.S. but he identified it as a main solution because immigrants have a higher fertility rate than native-born American citizens (Chavez, 2015).

Of the many organizations that Dr. Tanton founded, all have concluded that immigration is the cause of excessive population growth in the United States. One of his organizations, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), is considered a hate group that advocates immigration reduction (Weisberg, 2010). Their belief is that immigration needs to be reduced to 300,000 individuals entering the U.S. a year. They also believe that the Fourteenth Amendment should not apply to children born to undocumented individuals living in the United States (Weisberg, 2010).

Dr. Tanton worried about high fertility rates among Latinos and Asian individuals and how they surpass those of the “native born”, meaning the white American population (Chavez, 2015). Dr. Tanton felt that Americans of European descent were superior to the “fertile” immigrants coming in, and said that the U.S.

is becoming invaded by immigrants “defecating and creating garbage and looking for jobs” (Elford, 2010). His organizations have over a million members, and the FAIR foundation specifically provides statistical data to congress on immigration. They also lobby for harsher border monitoring and lowering the cap on annual legal immigration to avoid not placing a strain on U.S. resources (Conniff, 1993).

One of the supporters of the FAIR organizations is the Pioneer Fund, an organization that was founded by a millionaire in 1937 who wanted Black Americans to be sent to Africa and endorsed Nazi eugenicists in Germany (Conniff, 1993). FAIR also claims that immigration disrupts American culture, by increasing crime rates, and it “steals” jobs from the rightfully deserving American people (Weisberg, 2010). It is important to remember that the United States is a country made up of immigrants and recruited to help grow its economy through providing them with jobs.

History of Recruitment by the U.S. Government of Undocumented Individuals

Immigration in the United States increased around the year 1910. Agriculture was beginning to prosper and expand in the Southwest partly due to the expansion of the railroad. Men fleeing the Mexican Revolutionary War helped to fill increasing labor demands. These traveling migrant workers were considered ideal for these work conditions, because they worked in the fields and on the railroad tracks, and eventually went back home. American employers viewed these men as not requiring capital or social investment, therefore they viewed their legal responsibility to them as non-existent, making them appear less difficult to please

compared to their American counterparts (Molina, 2011). Because of this lack of legal responsibility exercised by their employers, these immigrant workers were expected to live in unsanitary conditions that were associated with the spread of disease in the United States (Molina, 2011). This contributed to the history of racial profiling and discriminating against undocumented individuals working in this country.

From 1942-1968, the United States and Mexico collaborated on the Bracero Program. This was a partnership that was arranged with Mexico, again for work in agriculture and on the railroads, to fill World War II labor vacancies (Ramirez, 2012). Unfortunately, these individuals risked being deported if they sought medical care, because of the belief that they spread disease (although part of the agreement of the Bracero Program was to have immigrants go through a rigorous health screening before entering the country). This also contributed to Americans' perception that immigrants deplete the U.S. economy (Molina, 2011). These conflicting messages that the United States formulated regarding undocumented workers carries through to this day.

Win-Win! But for Whom?

In an article, "When do Papers Matter? An Institutional Analysis of Undocumented Life in the United States" (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012), the authors argue that countries like the United States have immigration laws and a labor force structure that work together to exploit undocumented workers. This dynamic is supported because it creates a legal economic surplus while maintaining a source of cheap labor. This mixed message provided to undocumented individuals in the U.S.

workforce is what reinforces the growth of this sector of the economy. Individuals who are not recognized as being in this country legally and are dependent on maintaining their invisibility in the labor market are going to take seriously the threat of deportation as an attempt to discourage their demands for fair working conditions. This is, in a sense, creating another “border”; if the worker remains behind the lines of cheap labor, then the threat of involving immigration law is not exercised, but kept where they can see it and be reminded of it.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed in 1986 as an attempt to discourage illegal entry of undocumented individuals (National Immigration Law Center, 2015). This was exercised by holding the employer criminally responsible for hiring an undocumented individual. Even with this act in place, employers continued to employ undocumented individuals. In 2012, 1 in every 20 employed persons in the United States was an undocumented individual (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012). The IRCA Act did not deter employers from risking the hiring of these individuals. It can be assumed that this act is not strictly enforced because of the previously stated dynamic between immigration laws and the need for economic surplus in the United States.

The article, “Racial Profiling and Immigration Law Enforcement: Rounding Up of Usual Suspects in the Latino Community” (Romero, 2006), further explains the conspiracy in which immigration law facilitates the conditions to provide “cheap labor” in the U.S. work force. The authors discuss research that shows that U.S. border policies allow a certain amount of undocumented individuals into the country to satisfy employers’ need for this type of labor, while increasing the budget

for Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Border Patrol (Romero, 2006). The cost of detaining undocumented individuals attempting to cross the U.S. border has increased since the establishment of the Immigration and Reform Act (IRCA). Analyzing the cost-effectiveness of the INS is questionable; some researchers claim that it's work is an illusion helping to fuel politicians' quest to instill fear into the American public of "illegal alien" takeover (Romero, 2006).

Send them back then?

Mass deportation has been done in the United States before with rather difficult consequences. "Operation Wetback", an offensive term referring to Mexicans who crossed the Rio Grande border into the United States, was a raid that occurred in 1954 that deported more than a million Mexicans (Arrocha, 2013). During the Great Depression 400,000 Mexicans were deported back across the border; this included naturalized citizens and American-born children of immigrants in what was described by the Wickersham Commission (also known as The National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement) as "unconstitutional, tyrannic, and oppressive" (Arrocha, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, Donald Trump is a candidate in the 2016 Republican presidential primary and has gained a significant amount of supporters by proposing deportation of immigrants, specifically Latino immigrants entering through Mexico, as one of the first things he will do if he is elected President.

Currently there are laws, regulations, and court rulings that were not available in the Great Depression that have put a process in place before an individual can be deported (Chavez, 2015). If Trump does become President and follows through with removing the 11 million undocumented individuals currently residing in the United States, it will cost between \$400-\$600 billion and will take about 20 years to complete according to the American Action Forum (Chavez, 2015). The American Action Forum (AAF), a conservative public-policy group, also believes that the detention and deportation of these 11 million individuals would lower the real gross domestic product by \$1.6 trillion (Chavez, 2015).

Working While Unprotected

Undocumented individuals make up the most vulnerable population in our workforce. They may be expected to work in unfavorable environments for little compensation compared to their American counterparts. In the article “Foreign-Born Workers: Trends In Fatal Occupational Injuries”, the authors explain that undocumented individuals are disproportionately working in riskier positions and companies and have a higher percentage of injuries and fatalities while on the job (Loh & Richardson, 2004). Employers who have violated wage and work hours regulations are most commonly found to be employing workers in the minimum wage sector of the workforce. This is also the sector that employs the most undocumented individuals. It includes agriculture, restaurants, garment manufacturing and janitorial work (Gleeson & Gonzales, 2012).

An example of this type of issue appears in the article, “Feeding America: Immigrants in the Restaurant Industry and Throughout the Food System Take Action for Change”, (Jayaraman, 2014). The restaurant industry is the second largest employer of undocumented individuals. Along with people of color, undocumented individuals are found mostly in the lowest paying positions in this industry. These individuals are not protected under labor laws and therefore the National Restaurant Association does not offer these individuals sick time or paid days off. Therefore they are forced to work sick and overtime, rarely with fair compensation. Undocumented individuals have reported having to work in kitchens while having H1N1, typhoid fever, and the flu, creating national health disasters (Jayaraman, 2014).

Employers are able to control these workers and maintain unsafe work conditions by threatening to call immigration enforcers if workers attempt to advocate for themselves by pursuing better work conditions or wages, (Jayaraman, 2014). Another motivating factor for these employers to hire these individuals is the fact that they are not entitled to insurance benefits and the employers are not required to abide by labor laws. Because these workers are placed in such risky positions, during economic recessions these workers are forced to tolerate these work conditions even more than before because of American workers compromising for lower pay.

Racist Undertones?

It would be detrimental not to recognize that racism is the driving force behind the actions taken by the United States towards these individuals. Understanding the interaction between the push and pull these individuals experience between Immigration Law Enforcement and the U.S. work force can be best understood from a critical race theory (CRT) framework. Critical race theory, as explained by the Harvard Law website (“The Harvard Bridge Project”, 2015), states that racism is constantly present in the American community. An individual does not need to experience micro-aggressions to feel racism present on a macro level, such as in social interactions, in messages they receive in the media, and in the governmental structures that surround them. Critical race theory further explains that powerful organizations in the United States are fundamentally based on white supremacy and white privilege. CRT also states that the message that the law is blind and just is untrue; CRT challenges liberalism and meritocracy as an agenda for furthering power, self-interest and privilege (“The Harvard Bridge Project”, 2015). Not everyone who works hard can attain wealth, power, and privilege, because systemic inequalities exist that are based on institutional racism.

An example of this is the use of racial profiling in an institutional effort to control any attempts undocumented individuals might consider in advocating for change (Romero, 2008). In a country where they are not protected by law, risking being seen and heard means risking being deported, means breaking up families and better futures that they risked their lives for by coming to this country. Unfortunately, physical appearance unfairly places foreign-born undocumented individuals under reasonable suspicion before the law. These violating raids

normalize for the American community that undocumented individuals are problem groups that need to be contained, and sent back to their “own country” (Ebert & Ovink, 2014).

Racism surrounds and drives the kind of work for which undocumented workers are being hired. In the article, “Feeding America: Immigrants in the Restaurant Industry and Throughout the Food System Take Action for Change”, Jayaraman (2014), describes an organization he a co-founded called “Restaurant Opportunities Center”. His team did a study where they sent in mock applicants and discovered that race was a significant factor in predicting the type of positions for which individuals were hired. They discovered that white applicants were twice as likely to be hired for coveted positions such as front of house work. This organization also dispatched mock applicants with different accents, since the NRA claims that it is difficult to place these undocumented individuals in these coveted positions because they are difficult to understand. They discovered that white individuals with European accents were considered desirable as opposed to people of color with accents (Jayaraman, 2014). Another observation was that undocumented individuals of color are paid an average of \$4 less an hour than non-immigrants in the same job category.

Employers consider undocumented individuals as preferable for positions involving inadequate working conditions (Gleeson, 2010). They view them as malleable and willing to withstand such conditions because of the lack of opportunities these individuals have to advocate for themselves in a discriminatory work force that refuses to protect them. Economic hardship in the country of origin

is a contributing factor as to why individuals risk their lives to move to a country that may not receive them with open arms.

In the article, “Corriendo: Hard Boundaries, Human Rights and the Undocumented Immigrant” (Scarpellino, 2007), the author explains why the U.S. government is hesitant to recognize individuals coming into this country because of the many types of hardship they have endured in their country of origin.

Acknowledging that the needs of these individuals were not met in their own country would imply that the U.S. is criticizing that country, and the U.S. does not want to disrupt a relationship with an ally (Scarpellino, 2007). Having their legal status looming over their heads shapes who they are, how they perceive themselves, and how they navigate within their environment. Having to carry the burden of the title of “undocumented individual” wherever they go restricts social mobility and their attempts to make collective change for themselves and others with similar circumstances. Critical race theory reminds us that maintaining oppressive environments benefits the privileged and perpetuates the need for disempowerment of undocumented individuals.

How are Medical Care and Housing Made Accessible for Unrecognized Individuals?

Besides the human rights of freedom of movement and the right to work, which are rights being exercised by undocumented workers in the United States, there is also the human right to adequate, safe shelter and health (United Nations, Human Rights, 2015). It is important to understand how this unrecognized

population is living. Do they have safe housing available to them? Are they able to access health care? This is not only important for the individual but also for the community as a whole, to make sure their co-residents are as safe and healthy as possible.

Documentation is needed to acquire housing. Because most landlords require such things as social security information, credit checks, etc., this severely limits undocumented workers' options for safe and clean housing (Hall & Greenman, 2013). The lack of proper legal documentation also prohibits these individuals from obtaining a mortgage, which takes away their opportunity to own and invest in a home. Not only does not having proper documentation diminish housing options it also can dictate what neighborhoods these folks are forced to choose from and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation by landlords (Hall & Greenman, 2013). Landlords are also required to check immigration status by law before renting to anyone, and can be used as a manipulating factor to intimidate and exploit undocumented workers (Cleaveland, 2013).

Race is also a contributing factor for these individuals having limited housing options. In the article "Mexico City North: Identity and anti-immigrant sentiment", the author explains that where one resides is not simply just a place to rest your head but also a representation of who you are and how your community is perceived as a whole (Cleaveland, 2013). A community or neighborhood's reputation reflects on an individual's identity; therefore an attack on one's community is often an attack on one's identity.

Making it difficult for certain populations to attain housing because of their ethnic and racial background is perpetuating discrimination. Maintaining community identity requires managing who can live there. Limiting accessibility of these dwellings to individuals who threaten community identity is exercised in legally acceptable ways (Cleaveland, 2013). American communities attempt to control “who can live where” by the use of gentrification, rent inflation, checking immigration status, etc.

Another important factor that must be considered is the consistent fear of being discovered and being deported, which is one of the reasons that having bank accounts and a credit history is not an option among this population (Hall & Greenman, 2013). Because of reduced housing options and fear of being detained for being in the country illegally, undocumented workers accept poor-quality housing in problematic neighborhoods. In the article “Housing and neighborhood quality among undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants”, the authors present research that explains that individuals who do not have legal status in the United States are less likely to interact with credit markets and banks, therefore their chances of owning a home is minimal (Hall & Greenman, 2013). Inconsistencies in pay and difficulty finding adequate housing, contributes to crowding (Hall & Greenman, 2013).

Crowding in this context is defined as individuals living in a space that is overcapacity in terms of amount of residents allowed to live in that space (Hall & Greenman, 2013). Undocumented workers are sometimes forced to live in these circumstances because of lack of financial resources and adequate affordable

housing. In a study done in New York City, research done among undocumented Mexican immigrants determined that homes that have many occupants increase the likelihood of exposure to contagious diseases (Standish, Nandi, Ompad, Momper, & Galea, 2010). This study also points out that because of the lack of upkeep in these less regulated communities, there is higher mold count, pest infestation, poor quality drinking water, asbestos, etc. (Standish, Nandi, Ompad, Momper, & Galea, 2010). Due to lack of legal status, these conditions are tolerated for fear that their landlord will threaten to report their immigration status to authorities (Cleaveland, 2013).

Unfortunately not only are undocumented workers forced to live in less than adequate conditions, they are also excluded from receiving health insurance. Not having documentation stating that they are in this country legally limits their possibilities of qualifying for health insurance (Edward, 2014). This lack of access to affordable health care not only affects the individual but the community as a whole (Kullgren, 2003). Because this population is not entitled to receive this federally funded privilege, they tend to tolerate health issues longer, most likely having to access emergency room services or ignoring the illness completely, which threatens the health of the country if the disease is infectious (Edward, 2014).

It is important to recognize the need for all individuals to have access to health care in this country regardless of their immigration status. Because the emergency room is one of their only options for receiving health care, the financial effect is still absorbed by the American health care system anyway (Edward, 2014). Besides being afraid of deportation if medical services are sought, the experience of discrimination is another deterrent for this population. Medical staff who do not

those who do not speak the language of the patient were less persistent in attempting to understand the health issue (Nandi, Galea, Lopez, Nandi, Strongarone & Ompad, 2008). It is critical to understand that financial strain can be decreased if undocumented individuals are also covered by health insurance. This will decrease the use of emergency care by the individual having access to preventative care, and reducing possible national outbreaks (Edward, 2014).

Where? The Berkshires?

There is a consistent growth in the Berkshire immigrant population. Berkshire County, Massachusetts is located on the furthest western side of the state extending from the Vermont border on the north to the Connecticut border on the south. It had a recorded population of 131,219 in 2010. From 2000 to 2010, the foreign national population of Berkshire County has doubled from 3.7% in 2000 to 7.2% in 2010. (American Fact Finder, 2015). In the whole state of Massachusetts, one in seven individuals is foreign born and half of those are not here under legal recognition (Berkshire Immigrant Center, 2015).

Berkshire county was founded in the 17th century when Dutch settlers came from New York State and overthrew the native Mohican's who were living in this territory. Eventually The British military continued the war against the Mohicans. The English settled the area and it became an area with many American milestones:

- **In 1781 Elizabeth “Mumbet” Freeman, a black slave, sued the state of Massachusetts and won her freedom in a Berkshire county court. This lawsuit brought what was the beginning of the end to slavery in Massachusetts.**
- **The Crane company, located in the Berkshires, has been the predominant supplier of paper for American currency here for seven generations.**
- **Susan B. Anthony who worked hard to abolish slavery and discrimination against women was also born in the Berkshires.**
- **Herman Melville, in his home in the Berkshires, inspired by the Berkshire mountains wrote his novel, “Moby Dick”.**
- **One of the founding members of the NAACP and one of America’s greatest Black intellectuals, W.E.B. Du Bois, was born in the Berkshires.**
- **The Berkshires is also home to MassMOCA, the largest modern art museum in the country.**

(McLaughlin, 2007).

Besides being a famous tourist attraction, the Berkshires is also known for being an area of Massachusetts that is considered “progressive left”. In the 2016 Presidential primary, 26,258 individuals voted in the Democratic primary compared to 4,837 individuals who came out to provide the Republican vote (Berkshire Eagle, 2016). In a county that is mostly voting for the Democratic primary candidates it can be assumed that Donald Trump’s selling point of deporting illegal immigrants is not very appealing to Berkshire residents.

The chapter that follows describes how this qualitative exploratory study was conducted to gain a better understanding of the life of the undocumented worker in Berkshire County. This study gathered information from 12 undocumented workers living in the Berkshires and mainly focused on understanding their experience in the labor force, as well as how they obtain housing and access to health care. Information was also gathered on how they entered the U.S., why they chose to live in the Berkshire area, and if the risk of living in a country that does not recognize them legally was worth leaving their country of origin.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

A major goal of this study is to increase awareness of the working conditions and life experiences of undocumented individuals in The Berkshires. This work may contribute to a fuller understanding of what these individuals face in the workforce and how we may better support this population in earning fair pay in favorable working conditions. The reason this study focuses especially on work conditions is because this is one of the central reasons why individuals risk their lives crossing the border. This study also explored the participant's experience in seeking and obtaining housing and medical care, two areas that also compromise the

undocumented individual's invisibility in an area where they are not recognized legally.

The researcher conducted a qualitative exploratory study. This consisted of three parts: first the collection of demographic data through closed-ended questions; second, the subjects were asked 15 semi-structured open-ended questions; third, the interview ended by asking the participants if they wanted to share or add anything to the interview (Appendix C and Appendix D). This allowed subjects the opportunity to share experiences that were not covered in the interview questions.

Sample

The researcher interviewed twelve adult individuals who identify as being in this country without legal recognition. These are individuals who are considered undocumented, meaning they were not born in this country and do not have documentation stating they are permitted to be in the United States under legal recognition. The researcher used a snowball nonprobability approach to find these subjects by contacting, via telephone, several Berkshire residents who worked in some capacity with undocumented workers. The owner of a plumbing business and the director of a local organization that connects individuals of low income to resources both agreed to provide contact information for individuals who might be interested in participating in this interview.

The individuals who did participate in this project provided contact information for other individuals who also agreed to be a part of this study. All

recruited individuals willingly volunteered to be subjects and were informed that at any time they were free to decide not to participate. All subjects completed the interview for this project.

Subjects who voluntarily agreed to participate met the specific criteria to be a part of this study, such as: individuals must have been born in a country that is not part of the U.S. or its territories, subjects must be eighteen years or older, subjects must be employed as an undocumented individual or must have been in the recent past. All 12 subjects currently held jobs in Berkshire County at the time they were interviewed for this study. As stated earlier, all subjects willingly volunteered to be in this study and were informed of their right to terminate at anytime during the interview.

Five of the 12 participants were referred to the study by the owner of the plumbing business, who provided two participants, and the director of the local organization, who provided the remaining three. These five participants provided contact information to the researcher for the other seven participants who were interested in being interviewed for the study. All willing participants were asked to sign a consent form in their native language, which was provided in both English (Appendix A) and Spanish (Appendix B). All participants spoke Spanish as their native language, therefore all signed the Spanish consent form.

Researcher Background Speaking Spanish

The researcher for this study did all necessary language translations to accommodate both English and Spanish speaking participants. The consent form

used was Smith College's "Consent to Participate in a Research Study" form and it was translated from English to Spanish by the researcher. Because all participants were native Spanish speakers, they were all provided with the choice to read and sign the Spanish consent form. All interview questions were also available in both English and Spanish, which was also translated by the researcher. Because Spanish was the native language of all participants, the researcher conducted all 12 interviews in Spanish.

The researcher is fluent in both English and Spanish, making it possible to conduct and translate all interviews for this study. To further explain the researcher's qualifications to provide reliable Spanish translations in this study, the researcher lived in a Latino country where Spanish was the main language from the age of six to 17 years old. This researcher has been hired in the past to translate books from English to Spanish, worked as a bilingual domestic violence counselor, and translated documents for a state program from English to Spanish.

Research Study Design

This qualitative exploratory study was designed to collect in-depth first hand information from 12 undocumented individuals living and working in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Based on the literature, there is extensive research done in attempting to understand the working conditions, access to health care, and dwelling experiences of undocumented immigrants in the United States. However there is no research literature about these experiences shared by undocumented

immigrants living specifically in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. This study will allow some insight into how undocumented individuals are experiencing these three areas in a fairly liberal section of the state of Massachusetts.

A three part research design was developed which consisted of collecting demographic information, a 15 semi-structured open-ended question interview, and ended with an opportunity for the participants to add any information to their interview that they felt was necessary. These interviews began upon receipt of the Human Subjects Review approval letter (Appendix E). Participants were contacted via telephone and the participant chose time preference and meeting area. The researcher conducted all interviews in Spanish, which was the native language of all 12 participants. All information collected from the twelve participants was then translated to be analyzed for this study.

Risks

This is a very vulnerable population so every effort was made to protect their confidentiality. For these specific participants, detainment and deportation is a risk they face if the researcher does not take careful precautions. Therefore the researcher substituted all subjects' names with numbers to label interviews, notes, and any voice recordings. Following federal law, this confidential information will be kept in a locked compartment during the thesis-writing process where it will remain for three years thereafter. This information will then be destroyed by the researcher. The researcher was also aware that meeting places could also place these participants at risk. Priority was given to coordinate with the participant to

conduct the interviews in a location and at a time that worked best for them. This allowed the participant to control where they felt safest to participate, at a time that did not compromise their work or other commitments.

Benefits

It is important to consider how this study might benefit the participants. The researcher's intention for conducting this study is to bring awareness and more attention to the working conditions faced by undocumented individuals who are not protected under U.S. labor laws. Another area explored in this study was how these 12 participants access health care and find suitable housing. Individuals who agreed to participate in the study will hopefully gain satisfaction in the knowledge that their personal experiences are important to explore and acknowledge in a country that does not recognize them as legal citizens. Another possible benefit to these participants is that the data collected from their interviews could be used to encourage and reinforce further research, which eventually could lead to greater public awareness and increased efforts to improve their experience as undocumented workers in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.

Data Collection

Data collection began by providing the participants with consent forms explaining the study. This included information on the possible risks and benefits of participating. Once this was completed and signed, the researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with each participant. This allowed the

participant the privacy to elaborate in any area of the interview process. The interviews lasted between 25-45 minutes. Interviews began by asking participants demographic information, in order to identify patterns, trends, and variations in participants' backgrounds and establish a baseline for comparing collected data. This was then followed by 15 semi-structured questions prepared specifically for this study.

These questions were developed to gather direct information from the participants on their experiences with obtaining housing, accessing medical care, and working while undocumented in the U.S. Please see Appendix C and Appendix D for the questions asked in the study. All questions allowed opportunity for the participant to expand as needed. The interview ended by asking the participant if there was anything they would like to add or anything they felt was important to make others aware of. All interviews were recorded and labeled with a number assigned to the participant. The researcher then translated and transcribed all interviews. Data was then analyzed and findings are explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This chapter will discuss the experiences of 12 undocumented individuals living in the Berkshires. All participating subjects currently work and reside in this area. The interview began with gathering demographic information from each participant and then consisted of 15 semi-structured questions that were developed to better understand their decision to move to the United States and more specifically to Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The questions in the interview were also designed to better understand how these individuals navigate obtaining work, housing, and access to health care in a country that does not recognize them as having legal status.

Participants were recruited through a non-probability/snowball sampling method. The researcher approached several Berkshire residents who worked in some capacity with undocumented workers: the owner of a plumbing business and the director of a local organization that connects individuals of low income to resources. Both agreed to provide contact information for individuals who might be interested in participating in this interview. The individuals who did participate in this project provided contact information for other individuals who were willing to be interviewed as well.

The interview consisted of three parts: it began with collecting demographic information through closed-ended questions, followed by fifteen semi-structured open-ended questions, and then ended by asking the participant if there was anything else they would like to share that was not covered in the interview.

Part I of the Interview: Demographic Data of the Participants

Of the twelve participants interviewed for this project, three were female identified (25%) and the remaining nine were male identified. The age range of these subjects was between 22 and 54 years old with a mean of 36 years old. All participants identified as either Latino or Hispanic with an education level of some high school or less. Seven of the twelve participants live in the Berkshires with their spouse and children and three provide and send money to their families in their country of origin. Two of the men participating in this project were recruited by American and Guatemalan recruiters through the H-2B visa program.

The H-2B program recruits foreign nationals to the United States to fill non-agricultural work only after they determine that they cannot fill these positions with willing and qualified American-born workers (United States Department of Labor, 2016). This position is a one-time-only seasonal position. Both individuals who participated in this interview are living in the Berkshires after their visas had expired, therefore living under illegal status.

The largest portion of the sample, 58%, was from Mexico. This reflects the Berkshire census in 2010, where the largest non-American Latino population was from Mexico (American Fact Finder, 2015). However, if the sample in this study was exactly proportional to the non-American Latino population in Berkshire County, Mexicans would constitute 25% of the sample. The snowball recruitment for the participants in this study might contribute to the higher number than their actual percentage in the census. Also these numbers are based on the census of Berkshire County in 2010; it is possible that the Mexican population has since increased.

Part II of the Interview: Overall Understanding of the Participant's Experience In the Berkshires

Country of Origin

All participants that agreed to be interviewed were Latino; eleven of these individuals made the decision to enter the United States as adults. Foreign-born Latinos are the largest population of immigrants living in the Berkshires according to the 2010 Berkshire County Census. Latinos make up 3.5% of the total 7.2% total of Berkshire residents from other foreign born countries (American Fact Finder, 2015). Of the twelve participants, seven were born in Mexico, two from Guatemala, one from Ecuador, one from the Dominican Republic, and one from Honduras. One of the male subjects who walked across the border from Mexico shared that it is fairly easy to walk across the border: “no todo el borde esta vigilado, hay kilometros y kilometros”, (not all of the border is watched, there is kilometers and kilometers). Only two participants were related in this study, brothers, who were born in Mexico. The younger of these brothers came over with his parents when he was a child. His older brother chose to move to the United States as an adult with the help of their father. He explains why he made the choice to join his family:

“My parents left me and my older brother with my paternal uncle and his family. My mother told us that they couldn't bring us because it would be too dangerous for boys like us, too hard, and that we would be taken away from her if the patrolmen found us. My father sent my uncle money to take care of us and then when I was 14 years old I stopped working on the family farm

and went to the city. It was too corrupt, everything was connected to drugs, and that's not my thing. After trying to make it there for a few years I realized that there was nothing for me and I needed money if I wanted a wife, some children. I talked to my father and he said he would help me and my brother once we got there. When I first came to the Berkshires my dad got me a job working on a farm for three seasons and then he started doing construction and we went with him".

This subject continues to work as part of a clean up crew with his younger brother at construction sites for a local house building company. He has lived in the Berkshires for 15 years and is happily married with three children.

Occupation in Country of Origin

As stated earlier, all but one of the participants entered the United States as an adult, and all of these participants had worked in their country of origin. Four of these participants had worked on their family farm and all shared that they harvested the produce for themselves as well as sold it to provide for their families; all four participants shared that they harvested "frijoles" or beans, among other things. The occupation held next by the most participants was construction; two of the individuals interviewed had worked as construction workers. One of the participants was a carpenter; another worked as a banker, and one individual shared that he was an artisan who sold his art pieces to American tourists who came to his city. The remaining two participants were business owners; one taken over

his families upholstery business and the other participant owned a convenience store where she also cooked for her customers. She shares:

“I had my own business, I owned a store where people could sit down and eat. I also had pigs and chickens right outside of the store. The kitchen was in the back and people would order food and they ate there, it was like this here, a restaurant. I come here and I am a dishwasher, a maid”.

Currently this participant works as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. She further shared that this was the best place she had ever worked in the Berkshires. When asked why, she said that the chef owner of the restaurant always feeds her his new “invenciones” (inventions), and lets her take sick time as long as she gives him notice. She continued by adding, “he yells a lot but that’s what chefs do, but he is a good person”.

Occupation in the Berkshires

Currently these twelve individuals all hold jobs in the Berkshires; five of these participants work at more than one job. All of these individuals work separately except for the two subjects who are siblings, who work together as part of a construction cleanup crew. Both of these men have a second job; one is a house painter and the other picks fruit on a farm during the summer. The three women who participated in this study all work as dishwashers. Two of them also work as housekeepers, one in a local motel and another in a resort. The participant who worked at a local resort shared that she and her coworkers are constantly “yelled at” by their supervisor. All of her coworkers are also undocumented workers.

Two of the male participants work as welders. Another male participant works as a handy man who shared that he does odd jobs all over Berkshire County. One of the participants has worked for ten years on a local farm and is laid-off for three months in the winter. When asked what he does during the time he does not work, he stated that he reads. He has not seen his family since he moved out of Mexico but speaks with his family several times a week. He has three daughters, all in their early twenties. He was asked if he missed his children and his wife. He said, “yes, but what can you do?” He cannot leave the country for fear of not being able to come back in and will only go to Mexico to move back there permanently.

Another male participant shared that he does tree work. When asked what that meant, he explained that he climbs trees to trim them. This participant shared that he had never done this type of work before and “me terrorizo estar tan alto!” (it terrorized him being so high trimming trees). His H-2B visa was for horticulture. He was never told that he would be climbing trees as his new occupation. He added that he had to get used to heights fast; he had worked hard to obtain this visa and his family helped save the money to pay the H-2B recruiters. The remaining two participants work as cooks in local restaurants; one also works during the day as a construction worker.

Why and How Participants Entered the United States

All but one of the participants interviewed shared that they moved to the United States because they were in search of a better life. Four of these eleven individuals send money back to their spouses and completely support their families

back in their country of origin, meaning that their wives do not have to work. Nine of these individuals entered the country by walking across the Mexican border, (one of whom took a plane from Honduras to Mexico and then walked into the United States).

One story offered by a participant explains what it was like walking across the border. He shared that it was difficult making the decision to leave his homeland of Mexico and everything he knew growing up on his father's farm. He had heard from one of the families in his country town about how well her husband was doing working in New York City, which is why he decided to try to cross the border. He continued by saying that it took him about a year to save the fee required by the local "coyote" which is spelled the same in English, coyote.

Coyote is a Mexican term referring to a person who is paid to guide individuals who are walking across the U.S. border through Mexico. With the help of his family he raised the \$2500.00 and joined a group of people entering through Arizona. They traveled mostly during the night when it was less hot to save on water and when the risk of being seen by border police was lower. It took three days. He remembers being so scared that he could not eat but was constantly thirsty. When asked if there were any close calls with border police he said, "no, gracias a Dios", (no, thank God). The female participant from the Dominican Republic entered the country by traveling in a boat. She did not offer any more information as to where her boat landed but did add that she was fleeing her husband's lover whose family was threatening to kill her.

Two of the male participants entered the country legally by being recruited in Guatemala through the H-2B program. During the time of this interview both of these individuals are currently living in the United States illegally because their visas have expired and they chose to remain in the country. One of these participants shared that even though he was first recruited by a Guatemalan H-2B visa worker, he was told that they would not complete the process unless he paid what was equivalent to \$5000.00 U.S. dollars. When asked during the interview if this was part of the visa process he said no, that this was illegal, but in order for the visa process was to be completed this is what candidates had to do. He continued by adding that the money is not only for the Guatemalan worker but also a portion is given to the American recruiter as well.

Would Participants Do it Again

This interviewer also asked participants if, after their present experience living here in the United States without legal recognition, would they do it again? Seven of the participants said they would do it again. One participant who entered as a child stated that he does not know his homeland; the U.S. is the only home he knows. The other five subjects said “no”. Some of the offered answers are:

- “But can I complain? As long as I work I eat.”
- “This was too hard, people are too racist.”
- “No tratan a uno bien en este pais” (they do not treat one well in this country).

One participant shared, “I would not come here if I could do it over, but I do not go hungry here”. When he was asked to elaborate, he spoke of his childhood and how he cannot think of a time living in his native country of Mexico and not feeling hungry. “No quise que mis hijos crecieran asi, conociendo hambre asi, no”, he did not want his kids to grow up knowing hunger like that.

Reason for Moving to Berkshire County, Massachusetts

There are various reasons why these participants chose to move to live and work in the Berkshires. One individual was recruited specifically to the Berkshire area through his H-2B visa to work in landscaping/tree work. All the other participants arrived in major cities such as New York City, Boston, etc, and eventually moved to the Berkshires. Work availability was a reason for four of these participants to move to the area.

Three of the individuals interviewed moved to live with family that were already established in the area and one moved to the area because a friend found him work. One of the women participating in this study shared that she was moved to the area due to fleeing an abusive relationship. The domestic violence agency that was assisting her transported her to the Berkshires to keep her safe from her abuser.

Two participants shared that they moved here because of not feeling safe living in major cities. One of these subjects, who was living in New York City, offered that he was not used to city life. He added that he could only afford to live in apartments with other undocumented workers and there was no space. In addition

he would often hear gunshots in his neighborhood, so it was hard coming home at night. He wanted a family but did not want to raise a family in a “place like that”, so he and his wife moved to the Berkshires after connecting with her uncle who was already living in the area. He shared:

“It is more tranquil here. My wife was pregnant and she seemed to be in a better mood, you know? She was nicer to me, ha! I started to work with her uncle at the shop and it was different here, I mean the Americans don’t go out of their way to be nice but they don’t harass you as much. I always get paid here. The neighborhoods are not as bad as the one in New York, I will never move back there, the Berkshires has opened doors for me”.

This participant and his family have been living here for almost seven years. He was impressed that his wife was covered by the state health insurance while she was pregnant with both of their children. He currently does welding work and shared that he is working on obtaining his green card.

How Participants Find Work

The Latino community appears to be a valuable resource when seeking work in the Berkshires. Of the twelve participants, half were able to secure employment through acquaintances who were able to direct them to “under the table” employment. A female participant shared that her supervisor at a local motel told her that, if she knew of any other women looking for “under the table” work as housekeepers, to have them apply there. It appears that this population is desirable for this type of work at this motel. Two of these individuals were recruited through

the H-2B visa for specific non-agricultural work, however at the time of this project both are working in the area as undocumented workers because their visas have expired. Five of the participants found employment through family members who were able to assist them in seeking work. The remaining participant applied and was granted a work permit through the resources provided by the domestic violence shelter where she had been residing. She currently works as a housekeeper at a spa and golf resort and is paid \$9.50 an hour. She is the sole provider for her three children.

How Participants Find Housing

Another area where the Latino community in Berkshire County has been a useful resource is in finding housing. Seven of the participants shared that they were able to find housing through speaking to acquaintances in the community. Three of these members shared that as single men they lived in a shared apartment; one specifically reported that he lived with seven other roommates in a two-bedroom apartment. This particular house has four apartments and is known as the house where undocumented individuals live in the south county area of the Berkshires. At the end of the evening, people would sleep wherever they could find space to roll out a mat. One participant moved in with family members after he agreed to move to Berkshire County from New York City. Three of the individuals interviewed were provided housing by their employer.

One of these participants shared that he was placed in an unfinished house with no insulation that became very cold in the winter. His boss gave him a discount

on the rent if he worked on finishing the house. This was to be done on his own time and not as part of his regular day job. When asked during this interview if he finished fixing the house, he said he did not and that once he saved enough money he moved into his own apartment. This did not compromise his day work with his boss, but he added that he did notice that this appeared to be a pattern with incoming workers needing a place to live. This appears to be an economically efficient way to rehab a house, by receiving rent while having the tenant work on it.

The last participating subject was directed to subsidized housing through the domestic violence shelter in the Berkshires. She had been sleeping on a couch at a friend's home in Boston with her children after she fled an abusive relationship. She stated that she does not feel safe, because there are drug transactions happening right outside in the parking lot. At the time of this project only two of the participants lived in a shared housing arrangement, coincidentally the youngest and eldest participant. The youngest participant still lived with his parents and the eldest participant lived in a rented house with roommates. He and his wife rent a bedroom in this house. They were forced to give up their apartment when his wife injured her back while employed at a local curtain company. His wife hurt her back while moving a large roll of material used to make curtains. After this she could no longer spend the required hours sitting at the sewing machine and was forced to quit. Since then he is the only one supporting them while also sending money to his family in Mexico.

Feelings About Their Housing and Neighborhoods

Most participants shared that they did not feel safe in their homes and residential areas. Eight of the participants did not feel safe in their neighborhood. One participant reported that he received a letter from the post office saying that the mailman did not feel safe delivering his mail, and was asked to put a mailbox outside of his house instead of having it on his porch. This participant went on to share that all of the houses on his street had their mailboxes on their porch. When asked during the interview if he was aware of any other Latinos living on his street, he said that his home was the only one with Latino residents. Another participant shared that when his children were playing outside in the yard, they would occasionally be yelled at by his neighbor who was white. The four remaining participants reported that they felt safe in their neighborhood and comfortable in their homes.

Access to Medical Care and Opinion of Quality of Treatment

Health insurance is not available to undocumented individuals in Massachusetts, specifically Berkshire County. None of the twelve participants in this project were eligible for health insurance except for two of the women. However both women only qualified for health insurance while they were pregnant. One of these women recently gave birth and is anticipating losing her health insurance in the near future. Nine of the twelve participants use the emergency room as their primary source for accessing medical care, and all shared in this interview that they have always paid for this service when they received the bill through the mail. The last participant uses the local medical clinic and pays for his medical care in full.

When asked during the interview if they felt like they were treated with respect while receiving medical care, nine out of the twelve felt that they were treated well and four did not feel that they were.

The stressors these folks experience due to not being able to take sick or personal time for self care is also important to consider. Maintaining mental health is an issue when individuals feel the responsibility to continue to work because their jobs are threatened if they take time due to illness. Stress from worrying about maintaining a job for their own survival but also for family members who also rely on their income both here and in their country of origin, produces a lot of pressure and mental strain. Lack of mental health services due to inaccessibility to affordable health care as well as limited mental health workers qualified to work with individuals who do not speak English is another issue that can have both micro and macro consequences.

Treatment at Work by Coworkers and Supervisors

When participants were asked how they felt about how they were treated at work, nine participants shared that they did not believe they were treated fairly. Some of the repeated themes they shared in the interview in terms of unfair treatment were based on their observations of how they were treated compared to their American coworkers. These themes included: being yelled at by their supervisor/boss, being made to work longer hours, less pay, and no vacation or sick time.

One subject shared that he was not allowed to take time off and was told that if he did he would be replaced “with the next desperate illegal wanting to wash dishes”. This caused this participant much anxiety when half of his face became paralyzed. He shared that he waited until after work to go to the emergency room, where he was told, that he had shingles. This was the cause of the paralysis in his face.

He was given medication and went back to work the next day. He said that his family back home depended on the money he sent them every two weeks and that the thought of them not eating would “break my heart”, “mi familia depende de mi para mandarle plata, mi esposa no trabaja se queda en la casa con los chiquillos”. His wife cannot find work and stays at home with the children; their only source of money is what he sends them. These individuals are not protected by the National Restaurant Association as explained in the article, “Feeding America: Immigrants in the Restaurant Industry and Throughout the Food System Take Action for Change”, therefore employers do not have to apply labor laws to address their needs (Jayaraman, 2014).

Two of the participants believed they were being treated “O.K.” at work. When asked to explain more, one of these participants shared that he was not sure whether or not he was receiving the same pay but his boss treated him fairly. Another one of these participants reported that the only difference he notices is that he is reprimanded if he uses his cell phone while at work but the American workers are not. Only one participant felt that he was being treated fairly and with the same respect as his fellow American coworkers. This participant worked as a tree cutter

and had been employed at this business for almost ten years. He felt that once he learned sufficient English, he was treated with more respect, and he assumes that he receives comparable pay.

The eldest participant, who currently does odd jobs in the Berkshires, shared that he feels that he is treated better here than in New York City, and has never not been paid for his work. He added that for many years he lived in New York City and worked as both a tire specialist and also as a dishwasher in a restaurant. He reported that there, “toman ventaja de uno”, they take advantage of one. He said “you never knew when they were going to pay you at the tire shop and at the restaurant”; although they usually did pay him for his work, often times he was not allowed to take breaks and was required to work longer shifts than his American coworkers. When asked if he was ever compensated for the missing paychecks he said no.

Threat of Deportation

Deportation is a constant fear among all of the participating subjects. Fifty percent of the participants have been threatened with deportation. Out of the six participants threatened with deportation, four of them shared that it was by a coworker; a neighbor threatened another participant, and one participant was threatened by her husband. One of these participants was actually deported. When asked how she came back to the United States; she said, “I walked across the border again”. Another participant who has not returned to her home in the Dominican Republic since leaving, shared, “mi alma esta triste, no puedo ver a mi mama”, (her

soul is sad, she cannot see her mother). Most of these individuals enter the U.S. border it is with the understating that they might not return to their homeland. Attempting to reenter the United States after visiting family is a risk most are not willing to take.

During the interview a participant shared, “Que no gane Trump. El quiere deportar a todos nosotros, no se da cuenta que todos somos inmigrantes, el tambien.” Translation: “Trump better not win. He wants to deport everyone, he doesn’t realize we are all immigrants, even him”. She continued by saying:

“We are sad here. I left all my friends, my sisters. They don’t make it easy for us here but we continue to do the work no one else wants to do. If these places could hire Americans, why don’t they? The only American on our crew is the boss. Americans don’t want to do this type of work, but someone has to, so if he deports us all, who will do this? I’m sure he likes his rooms clean”.

The presumptive Republican candidate, Donald Trump, has made a very aggressive effort to deliver his view on immigration in the United States. His desire to deport all immigrants, even the ones who are here with legal status (Beutler, 2016), has obviously reached these participants and is creating anxiety for them.

The same subject who shared that her soul is sad because she would like to see her mother also stated that she does not socialize and “keeps her head down”. She continued, “We do not come here to be seen as delinquentes (delinquents) like Trump says”. She also reported that she works hard, and sometimes she feels like giving up and going back to the Dominican Republic, but two of her children are in

high school and she cannot do that to them, “they’ve worked so hard, this is their American dream even if I have never found mine. I will never be able to own a house or start a business which is what I thought would happen here”. This participant shared in this interview that her youngest child, who is 10 years old, was born here and has never left the U.S., “esto es todo lo que conoce ella”, (“this is all she knows”).

Experience with Discrimination in the Berkshires

Eight of the twelve participants felt that they experienced direct and overt racism. These participants mentioned they experienced this at work or in their neighborhoods. Microaggression was another form of discrimination shared by four participants, meaning dirty looks and “cold” treatment such as at the grocery store or walking down the street.

Racial profiling and the obvious difference in appearance between the majority population in the U.S. and the undocumented workers interviewed for this project results in their constant fear of being discovered as not living in Berkshire County under legal status. In addition to all subjects fearing deportation because of their physical appearance arousing suspicion, all 12 participants have experienced microaggressions and racism. One subject stated that he cannot help that he was born with darker skin and it should not be a reason to be treated with such disrespect. Another subject stated, “they discriminate a lot, they do not realize we are people, we are human”.

During this portion of the interview, five participants shared that they experienced intimidation from another undocumented Latino individual. One participant, who has worked on a local Berkshire farm for almost ten years, shared that he was terrorized (“me terrorizo”) for a few years by a fellow undocumented coworker who said that he would report him to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (I.C.E.). When asked why he thought this coworker targeted him, he said he was not sure, and that this coworker might have been trying to have his own son get a job on the farm as well.

When this participant was further questioned about this experience, and he shared that his coworker stopped harassing him once his son was deported for being caught selling drugs. There was no participant in this study who reported not having experienced some form of discrimination from American coworkers or from their American supervisor, and it appears that competition among undocumented individuals for coveted work positions has created intimidation among this population as well.

Part of the motivation for developing this study was a story shared by a high school student who had recently moved to the Berkshires with her family from Mexico. Her father was pulled over for having a brake light out in his car. This was difficult for her family to believe, since her father and brothers were diligent in maintaining their cars to avoid attracting attention. When he was pulled over, the police discovered that her father was not here legally and detained him. He was eventually transported to Boston and after a few months during which a lawyer worked on her father’s case, he was deported. While her father was still in custody

in the Berkshires her family went to the only organization available to immigrants and were told there was nothing they could do and that they should attempt to not break the law.

Another study participant shared a similar story about this organization. This participant was in an accident where she was hit from behind but was being held responsible by the police who showed up at the scene. When she sought advice from this organization, the same worker told her there was nothing they could do once they broke the law. She was very frustrated by this experience and shared that no one goes to this organization unless they are looking for an English tutor. This participant is currently working with a lawyer from Boston in regards to this accident and has not been threatened with deportation.

The following chapter will discuss how the experiences of these participants in Berkshire County have been reflected in past literature as well as why there might be similarities and differences in other geographic areas compared to this specific area of Massachusetts. Known as a fairly liberal corner of the state, 26,000 of the 31,000 residents who voted, voted Democratic in the 2016 Presidential primary election. Therefore it can be assumed that these voters are not buying the Republican candidate hopeful, Donald Trump's, main message of deporting immigrants. This will be compared to the treatment participants experienced working and living in Berkshire County and how this might be viewed through a Critical Race Theory lens. Lastly, the strengths and limitations of this study will also be discussed, as well as how participant's experiences might inform areas for social work reform to better accommodate this voiceless population.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Immigration is an important part of American history. However, as important as it has been, it is generally presented in a negative light; the anti-immigrant sentiment. In the article “Donald Trump’s America”, the author explains that “every large-scale wave” of individuals entering the country brought on some type of discriminatory reaction (Chavez, 2015). Even in the 19th and early 20th centuries when Ellis Island welcomed many immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland, etc., Americans already living here were worried about how this would impact their lifestyle (Chavez, 2015). The factors that native-born Americans worried about in that time were that foreigners would steal their jobs, put a strain

on public resources, increase crime, and spread disease (Ramirez, 2012). Today these factors have not changed.

Summary Of Previous Findings And How They Compare To Trends In This Study

In review, the conclusions drawn from the researcher's findings, it is important to note that while the sample size is quite modest (12), the strength of the findings is often supported both by the author's long personal experience working with the undocumented community in Berkshire County and the cited related literature. On the few occasions where the interview findings, and the personal experience of the author and the related literature point in somewhat different directions, this is noted.

In this study 58% of the participants interviewed were originally from Mexico. This may reflect the literature that explains the relationship the U.S. developed with Mexico during another large-scale immigration wave. This occurred from 1942-1968, when individuals were recruited from Mexico through the Bracero program (Ramirez, 2012). This program was developed to fill vacancies in the U.S. workforce due to World War II. This collaboration between Mexico and the U.S. was in place for over 20 years. This historic relationship may partly contribute to today's large percentage of Mexicans in the undocumented population in the U.S. and in the interview sample in for this study.

Besides the Bracero program's mandate to recruit a Mexican labor force to fill gaps in the workforce, geography also plays a role in the predominance of

Mexicans in this population. Mexico borders four southwestern states, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. This provides a large stretch of land where Mexicans can enter the United States. This accessibility to entering the U.S. to find a “better life” (the reason given by 11 of the participants as to why they came to the U.S.) might explain why 75% of the subjects in this project made the dangerous border crossing, even those from Honduras and Ecuador. Because of the large number of individuals entering the country from Mexico, Arizona developed the Bill 1070 and California put in place Proposition 187. Both of these bills promote racial profiling; it is easy to target a population, which is visually different, due to racial background from the American native-born white majority.

At the time of these interviews, the 2016 presidential primaries were taking place, which seemed to be a source of anxiety for many of the individuals being interviewed. Donald Trump, a Republican presidential candidate, has gained many supporters by declaring that he will deport immigrants back to Mexico and have them pay for the wall he plans to build if he becomes President (Beutler, 2016). He appears to be playing on the average American citizen’s economic anxiety by making deportation one of the primary goals of his campaign for the presidency. He is blaming undocumented workers for the financial instability of native-born Americans. This approach is working and is reflected by the large number of his supporters and the fear expressed by some of the subjects interviewed.

All subjects in this study held jobs; five subjects worked two jobs a week. All of these subjects reported having no criminal record in America. Most shared that they do not make an effort to socialize outside the protection of their homes for fear

of getting into legal trouble related to their undocumented status. Participants were not criminals living off American resources but rather, appeared to be hard working individuals making money to support their families here and to send to their families back home. Otherwise they would have a difficult time making ends meet because of lack of work in their countries of origin.

Although all 12 subjects had paying jobs in the Berkshires, 11 of these participants felt that they were not treated respectfully at work compared to their American coworkers. Of the 11 participants, nine shared that they worked longer hours, received less pay, and had no vacation or sick time benefits. According to the article, “When Do Papers Matter? An Institutional Analysis of Undocumented Life in the United States”, these are common violations that undocumented workers experience in the American work force (Gleeson & Gonzalez, 2012). By maintaining this standard of treatment towards undocumented workers, their employers are able to pay them less compared to their American coworker, therefore raising their profit margin.

Maintaining invisibility appears to be a strategy that these participants practice. In describing how they avoid attracting attention to themselves, it seems that they attempt to do what is expected of them without creating any “noise” at work. Understanding that they are not protected by American labor laws, accepting their work conditions appears to be their best option for feeding themselves and their families. When faced with the choice of tolerating unequal treatment at work or facing the consequences set in place by the Federal government for being illegally employed (National Immigration Law Center, 2015), they choose to accept the work

conditions they are offered. This is emphasized by the stories of the male participant who continued to work while his face was paralyzed, the tree worker who was afraid of heights, and the housekeeper who was consistently yelled at by her supervisor. Most of the participating subjects in this study were not given sick or vacation time, and had no idea if they were paid what their American coworkers were receiving. Undocumented workers are treated as disposable and this is a reality these participants work under and thoroughly understand.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) explains how racism drives this oppressive interaction between the American boss and the undocumented worker. CRT explains that the individual racist is a reflection of a larger institutional racist system that was put in place by the dominant culture to further the power, privilege and self-interest of the employer. (“The Harvard Bridge Project”, 2015). The individuals in this study represent a minority population which is consistently taken advantage of by a structure which reinforces the majority group’s supremacy and privilege, in this case the privilege of native-born, generally white, Americans.

Understanding that most of these participants have come to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their family, and that they are willing to work hard while trying to navigate a new culture, ought to promote respect. Attempting to hinder opportunity for these individuals seems malicious. Using CRT as a lens to understand the relationship between the American business owner and the undocumented worker provides insight as to why mass deportation, though often promised during election years, has yet to happen.

Critical Race Theory helps to examine the conflicted relationship between the American business owner and their voiceless undocumented worker. It explains how institutional racism perpetuates the deep underlying motivation for economic growth at the expense of people who are seen as the inferior race. This is reflected in the story of one of the participants, who shared that she was hoping that, after working hard in this country, she would eventually be able to fulfill her “American dream” of starting her own business or owning a house. But after almost 10 years she continues to be yelled at by her supervisor and earns only \$10 an hour.

The treatment described by these participants is the result of more than simply direct interpersonal racism; treating this population in this manner is the result of institutional racism, which serves a greater purpose in American culture. Exploiting these individuals through labor is part of a larger plan, increasing economic growth of individual businesses, which is eventually reflected, in a greater overall American gross domestic product.

As a nation we depend on the labor of undocumented immigrants, but do not consider them worthy of coexistence. Besides failing to provide these individuals with protection under U.S. labor laws, American society also denies them access to affordable and adequate health care. (Edward, 2014). Participants in this study mostly accessed the hospital emergency room to meet their medical need and often waited until they were too sick to work before doing so. Another factor contributing to this pattern of accessing health care is that many of these subjects were not given sick time at their jobs. The practice of delaying treatment due to fear of losing their jobs is not only an individual issue but a community issue as well (Kullgren, 2003).

For example if these individuals are unable to get treatment for infectious illness, it compromises all members in that community regardless of legal status.

Another problematic area for these individuals to navigate is obtaining housing. Subjects in this study did not have too much difficulty in finding adequate housing. It appears that they were able to access their own immigrant community to point them in the right direction for access to housing. However, some did share that when they first arrived in Berkshire County, housing options were limited. Only after they developed relationships with already established immigrants, who could be used as references, were they able to find safer or more comfortable dwellings. Some participants reported harassment by their American neighbors as well as harassment by a mailman in the form of refusing to deliver a participant's mail.

Although participants spoke of experiencing discrimination in this county, it appears to be a relatively comfortable area in which to settle with their families. Berkshire County was appealing to many of these participants because of its slower pace compared to the major cities they arrived in when first entering the country. Participants described the difficulties of living in cities like Boston and New York City, where housing was difficult to obtain, overcrowded in order to make it affordable, and dangerous due to crime. In addition to the bad housing conditions, working conditions for this population in cities worst than in Berkshire County. Participants said that, unlike the Berkshires, getting paid for their work in these cities was not consistent and work opportunities were more competitive.

Work availability was one reason some of the participants moved to the area. Berkshire County is known for its many tourist attractions, from skiing in the

winter to theater and music festivals in the summer. There is a demand for individuals to work in the hospitality and food industry; there is no shortage of work available for under the table employees. Community support, greater safety for raising a family, and unofficial sponsorship of family members to this area are other reasons participants chose to live here. There is an unspoken understanding in Berkshire County of the need for this labor force, so coexistence between the native-born and the undocumented population is widely accepted in this area.

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

Strengths: This is a qualitative exploratory study attempting to understand how undocumented workers experience Berkshire County, Massachusetts. This county is known as a fairly liberal area of Massachusetts that depends on this labor force. Understanding what these individuals experience is important in maintaining a higher standard of treatment towards individuals who are not protected under American law. This study can provide some insight on how we can better support this population through these difficult but critical areas of self-sufficiency.

Another strength of this study is that it provides this population with the knowledge that their experience here is an area of concern for native-born individuals. This study attempts to give them an opportunity to share their struggles as well as their gained successes living in Berkshire County. Through this study needs were identified, such as, the need for affordable and preventative medical care, so that participants do not have to wait until their illness is unbearable before seeking treatment from the hospital emergency room.

A major problem for all of the participants is the inability to take sick time. Participants avoided taking time off from work to address their medical needs, which is not acceptable. Not only is it dangerous for an individual to have to work when they are ill, but this might also compromise the greater community if the illness is infectious. Many of these participants work in restaurants and resorts where they are not isolated; the possibility of an infectious outbreak could become reality.

This study also provided information about the lack of services and protection these individuals have available to them. Berkshire County could make a better effort to support this community by having resources such as English tutoring, translation services, legal services, and assistance with food and utilities hardships. Some participants shared that becoming more proficient in English resulted in better treatment at work. Legal services could help these individuals to understand their rights when detained by local police and could provide information on how to begin the process of naturalization if they choose to do so.

Limitations: This is a qualitative exploratory study. There was no attempt to solve a specific problem; instead, the goal was to increase understanding of undocumented worker's experiences and to identify problems to address in the future. Another limitation of this project is that it is a qualitative study with only 12 participants. However, other hardships may have been brought up if the sample size was larger.

Because of the personal interaction required in a qualitative study, participants may have been hesitant to fully disclose and elaborate their experiences

for fear of possible reporting and repercussions. All participants were interviewed face-to-face by a native-born researcher. This may have caused some discomfort when asked directly about their experiences with other native-born individuals. The time the researcher spent with each individual may not have been sufficient time to develop sufficient rapport.

For these reasons, and because of the inevitable power dynamic between researcher and participant, a completely comfortable interaction may not have been possible. Also the researcher was female identified; responses and elaborations might have been different if the researcher had been male. All subjects in this study were Latino, which is known to be patriarchal collectivistic culture. Again, the researcher has the privilege of being a native-born American, which provides an advantage over the population being interviewed. The time each individual spent in the interview might have caused an inconvenience to their already established lifestyle and daily routine with their families. Most interviews were scheduled to occur after the participants were done with their workday.

Implications for Social Work

Individual – On a micro level, social work agencies should consider increasing mental health services to this population. Currently in Berkshire County there are no agencies that provide mental health services to immigrants. This population experiences many traumatic situations:

- **Political chaos in their land of origin**
- **Leaving family behind**
- **Entering a country that does not want them or support them once they are here working in unfair conditions**
- **Having to constantly be vigilant due to the threat of deportation**
- **Feeling demeaned due to exploitation**
- **Facing racism and discrimination.**
- **Adjusting to a new culture and language**

Counseling agencies should design and incorporate therapeutic services for this population into their program. Failure to address these stressful factors would affect not only the individual but the community they live in as a whole. Stress and trauma can manifest into larger community issues that may require other social resources that are not prepared or educated in managing these possible larger consequences. General feelings of inferiority and lack of rights to voice injustices is a responsibility the social work community must address.

Social work reform – Social workers have a responsibility to advocate for a population with no voice in their community. Advocating for immigration reform on a macro level is essential for the overall health and productivity of a community. Promoting affordable health care for undocumented workers could diminish the possibility of epidemics; infectious illness does not discriminate. Future urban planning should also be inclusive. When developing housing, it is important to

recognize that populations like these exist and need clean, adequate, affordable housing.

Working with the legal system and the legislature is another area for advocacy, particularly regarding laws that could help to protect these individuals at work. This is a more complicated issue. Navigating legal repercussions for employers who hire undocumented workers, while having solid laws that look out for the wellbeing of the undocumented employee, is difficult but necessary.

The social work community should consider how state services and employees work with immigrants. Education on inclusion such as understanding different cultures and races so that unnecessary assumptions and stereotypes do not guide the treatment of these individuals by law enforcement, the education system, hospitals, etc.

Recommendations for further research

One area this study did not address is how the undocumented community navigates transportation in Berkshire County. There is a public bus system in the Berkshires that runs on an hourly schedule; however, it has limited pick up and drop off points and an inefficient transfer system. Besides these difficulties with the bus system, it has limited hours, running between 5:45am-7:20pm Monday through Friday, 7:15am – 7:00pm on Saturday, and closed on Sunday (berkshirerta.com, 2016). This is an inadequate schedule for individuals working on Sunday and/or working late hours in the hospitality field, such as in restaurants or hotels. Some

participants shared that they owned cars, but in order to drive legally a driver's license is necessary, which is difficult without legal documentation.

Resources available to this population during economic hardship is another area for further research. There is one local organization that is specifically available for immigrants in Berkshire County, however many of the participants have shared that they do not feel supported when using this organization and find it to be ineffective unless looking for an English tutor. Inquiring how these individuals navigate difficult economic times and where they seek assistance should be explored.

Another important area of discussion would be to explore how the economic help sent by these workers has benefited family members who are living in their country of origin. One participant shared that with the money she sent her family, they were able to build a house in Honduras. Understanding this can inform us on what the problems and needs are in those countries and how we can support them as a nation more sympathetically, as opposed to having hostile reactions when their citizens seek refuge in this country.

In closing, Berkshire County appears to be an area where undocumented folks invest their time and settle because of consistency in work and pay. Participants shared that, compared to past U.S. cities of residence; here they have been able to use the immigrant community to find work and housing. In addition to easier access to work and safer neighborhoods, consistent payment for their work has also been a reason undocumented workers remain in this area. It is important to recognize that although these are seen as benefits, there is still a need for labor law reform that will protect these working individuals. Regardless of the reason these

individuals made the decision to risk their lives to move to the United States, humane work conditions and treatment should be practiced and enforced.

All people have the right to make a better life for themselves; therefore standing in the way of this opportunity is inhumane. If there is significant uneven distribution of wealth among countries, migration can be expected (Inghammar, 2010). Working to provide for a family is a commendable act. Standing in the way of individuals seeking to empower themselves through migration runs counter to the way the U.S. began as a nation. Being a supportive country as a whole will benefit both the migrating individual and the host country by providing it with willing individuals who will strengthen our economy through this growing workforce. As long as there are possibilities of a better life for these individuals, already in a vulnerable position, Berkshire County can help support and maintain fair and humane work conditions.

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Appendix A



Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College □ Northampton, MA

.....
Title of Study: Experience of the Undocumented Worker in the Berkshires

Investigator(s): Tristan Vogel, Master's student at Smith College School for Social Work,
XXX-XXX-XXXX

.....
Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study to understand the experience of the working conditions of the undocumented worker in the Berkshires. This study also attempts to gain information on how these individuals obtain work, housing and health care in a country they do not have legal status.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are foreign born, live in the United States without legal status, and are/were employed in the U.S.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is to understand your experience obtaining work, housing, and health care while undocumented in the Berkshires.
- Ultimately, this research may be presented in an academic paper or thesis.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: find a time and a place where we can meet. During this meeting I will ask you to sign this consent form if you decide to participate in this study. Once you have agreed to participate and the consent form is signed I will then ask you 14 questions. This meeting should take an hour or less of your time.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has the following risks. First, It is possible that your identity will be compromised; second, the interview may create discomfort, bring up painful memories, and cause stress.
- There may be unknown risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are the information gathered could be used to improve working conditions to individuals who do not have legal status in the Berkshires and provide insight on how to provide easier access to housing and health care access to undocumented workers.

Confidentiality *[choose one of the following]*

Experience of the Undocumented Worker in the Berkshires: An Exploratory Study

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. When meeting with each participant the researcher will inform them of their right to privacy and confidentiality while gathering and storing of their information. The researcher will be the only person using this information and will not share this information under any circumstance without the prior consent of the participant.

Payments

- You will receive the following payment/reimbursement: the researcher will provide coffee and muffins during the hour meeting when participant is being interviewed. There will be no financial compensation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the researcher not use any of your study material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Tristan Vogel at tvogel@smith.edu or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact Phil Peake, Chair of the Smith College Institutional Review Board at (413) 585-3914.
- If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to Phil Peake at the number above. Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can found on the IRB website at www.smith.edu/irb/compliance.htm

Consent

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.

.....

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

[if using audio or video recording, use this section for signatures:]

1. I agree to be [audio or video] taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator(s): _____ Date: _____

Appendix B



**Consentimiento para Participar en un Estudio de Investigacion
Smith College □ Northampton, MA**

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**Titulo del Estudio: La Experiencia del Trabajador Sin Documentacion Americano en los
Berkshires**

Investigador(s): Tristan Vogel, estudiante de maestria en el Colegio de Smith.

Tel. xxx-xxx-xxxx.

.....

Introduccion

- Te estamos preguntando que participes en un estudio de investigacion para entender la experiencia de condiciones de trabajo del individuo sin ciudadania Americano. Tambien este estudio desea investigar como estos individuos obtienen trabajo, vivienda, y seguro medico en un pais donde no son reconocidos como ciudadanos con derechos.
- Fuiste seleccionado como un posible participante porque vives en Estados Unidos sin reconocimiento legal, naciste afuera de los Estados Unidos, eres mayor de la edad de 18, y fuiste empleado o has sido empleado en el pasado como un idividuo sin ciudadania Americana.
- Te preguntamos que leas esta forma y hagas cualquier preguntas que tengas antes de aceptar participar en este estudio de investigacion.

Proposito del Estudio

- El proposito del estudio es para entender su experiencia obteniendo empleado, vivienda, y seguro medico en el Berkshires como un individuo sin ciudadania Americano.
- Ultimamente, la informacion obtenido por esta investigacion sera presentado en un papel academico.

Descripcion del Procedimiento del Estudio

- Si aceptas estar en el estudio, te pidamos lo siguiente: encontrar un tiempo y sitio donde podamos reunirnos. Nos vamos a reunir solamente una vez donde te pedire que firmes el consentimiento para participar en el estudio. Despues te preguntare 14 preguntas. La reunion tomara no mas de una hora de su tiempo.

Riesgos e Incomodidades de Estar en el Estudio

- El estudio tiene los siguientes riesgos: Primero, es posible que su identidad sea comprometido. Segundo, puede ser incomodo para usted hablar sobre memorias, experiencias, y causarte estres. Por favor recuerde que puedes terminar de participar en esta entrevista en cualquier momento.

Beneficios de Estar en el Estudio

- Los beneficios de participar en este estudio son: la informacion que proves se puede utilizar para mejorar la cualidad del ambiente de trabajo del individuo sin ciudadania Americano y tambien puede ayudar a hacer que sea menos dificil para estos individuos de obtener vivienda y seguro medico.

Confidentiality *[choose one of the following]*

- Los archivos y grabaciones de audio seran mantenido estrictamente guardado confidencialmente. Archivos de esta investigacion estaran guardado en un gabinete de archive bajo llave, y todos archivos electronicos estaran cifrado y asegurado usando una contrasena protegiendo estos archivos. El investigador no va ha incluir ninguna informacion en ningun reporte que pueda ser publicado que posiblemente pueda indentificar al individuo.

Compensation

- El investigador va a proveer café y pastel durante la entrevista. No habra compensacion financiero ofrecido.

Derecho de Rechazar o Retirarse

- La decision de participar en esta investigacion es completamente suyo. Usted puede rechazar de participar en este estudio en cualquier momento sin afectar su relacion con el investigador de este estudio o el Colegio de Smith. Su decision de rechazar no resultara en ninguna perdida de tus derechos o beneficios. Tienes el derecho de no contestar ninguna pregunta, al igual puedes retirarse completamente del estudio en cualquier momento durante el proceso.

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Adicionalmente, usted tiene el derecho de pedir que el investigador no use cualquier del material contribuido.

Derecho de Hacer Preguntas y Reportar Preocupaciones

- Tienes el derecho de hacer preguntas sobre el estudio de investigacion y tener esas preguntas contestados por el investigador, yo, antes, durante, y despues de la investigacion. Si aun tienes preguntas sobre la investigacion, en cualquier momento, porfavor no dudes de contactarme, Tristan Vogel al correo electronico, tvogel@smith.edu o por telefono al xxx-xxx-xxxx. Si deseas puedes obtener un resumen de los resultados del estudio. Si usted tiene cualquier otro preocupacion sobre sus derechos como participante que no han sido contestado por el investigador, puedes contactar a Phil Peake, Presidente de la Junta de Revision Institucional del Colegio de Smith al 413-585-3914.
- Si tienes problemas o preocupaciones a resultado por su participacion, puedes reportar a Phil Peake al numero telefonico arriba. Alternativamente, preocupaciones pueden ser reportados si completas la forma de Preocupaciones del Participante, que se puede encontrar en el sitio de Web de IRB al www.smith.edu/irb/compliance.htm

Consentimiento

- Su firma abajo indicara que usted voluntariamente has decidido participar en este estudio, y has leído y entendido la informacion proveido arriba. Usted recibira una copia de esta forma con la fecha y su firma para guradar, al igual que cualquier otra material que el investigador considera necesario.

.....

Nombre del Participante (letra de molde): _____

Firma del Participante: _____ Fecha: _____

Firma del Investigador: _____ Fecha: _____

.....

1. Estoy de acuerdo ser audio grabado para esta entrevista:

Nombre del Participante (letra de molde): _____

Firma del Participante: _____ Fecha: _____

Firma del Investigador: _____ Fecha: _____

2. Estoy de acuerdo participar en la entrevista, pero no quiero que me audio graben:

Nombre del Participante (letra de molde): _____

Firma del Participante: _____ Fecha: _____

Firma del Investigador: _____ Fecha: _____

Appendix C

Thesis Interview Questions

Participant #:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Race:

Highest educational level completed:

Occupation in your land of origin:

Occupation in the U.S.:

Family makeup:

1 – Where were you living before you came to this country?

2 – Where you working there, and if so, doing what?

3 – Why did you come to this country?

4 – How did you enter the country?

5 – Why did you decide to move to the Berkshires?

6 – How did you find work here?

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7 – How did you find housing?

8 – How do you feel about your housing?

9 – How do you access medical care?

10 – How do you feel about your medical care?

11 - How do you feel about your work experience here?

12 – Have you ever been threatened with deportation?

13 – Have you experienced discrimination in this country?

14 – Is there anything else about your experience in the Berkshires you would like to share with me?

Appendix D **Preguntas de Entrevista para el Tesis**

Participante #:

Edad:

Sexo:

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Etnicidad:

Raza:

Nivel de educacion completado:

Ocupacion de trabajo en su pais de origen:

Ocupacion de trabajo en Estados Unidos:

Estructura de familia:

1 – Donde viviste antes de llegar a los Estados Unidos?

2 – Estabas trabajando? En que?

3 – Porque viniste a este pais?

4 – Como entraste al pais?

5 – Porque decidiste mudar a los Berkshires?

6 – Como encontraste trabajo aqui?

7 – Como encontraste vivienda?

8 – Como te sientes de su hogar?

9 – Como accedes atencion medico?

10 – Como te sientes sobre tu acceso medico?

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11 – Como te sientes sobre tu experiencia trabajando en esta area?

12 – Haz sido amenazado con deportacion?

13 – Haz tenido la experiencia de discriminacion en este pais?

14 – Hay algo mas que quieres compartir conmigo sobre su experiencia en los Berkshires?

Appendix E



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

March 20, 2016

Tristan Vogel

Dear Tristan,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

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Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,



Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: John Erlich, Research Advisor